

February 22, 2021

Dear Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, ranking members Sampson and Mastrofrancesco and distinguished Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

I am writing in favor of HJ58 and HJ59, the resolutions proposing constitutional amendments to allow no-excuse absentee and early voting in Connecticut.

As I read about people opposing expanding voter opportunity and/or declaring the 2020 presidential election a fraud, I think what they really mean is that only certain people should be able to vote. People, that is, who would be more likely to vote the way they do. This country has worked hard to live up to its founding principle of "all people are created equal..." We gave blacks the vote until we started restricting how they can vote, we gave women the vote, we enfranchise all immigrants who obtain citizenship. It is the will of the vast majority of people, that all people should be able to vote and that voting should be made easier, not harder.

It's not fair to Connecticut voters that we're one of only seven states that does not allow either early voting or no-excuse absentee voting.

No-excuse absentee voting was wildly popular last year, with one-third of all ballots cast absentee. Despite the logistical challenges, state and local election officials came through with flying colors. Expanded access to absentee voting led to record-breaking voter participation rates across the state. Polls show that both EV and NEAV enjoy overwhelming public support from Connecticut voters, regardless of party affiliation.

But to strengthen our democracy we need to do more than make it easier to vote; we need to ensure that winning candidates better reflect the will of the majority. **That's what Ranked Choice Voting offers, and it's why I'm also asking you to vote HB-5884, the Act Establishing a Task Force to Study Ranked Choice Voting, out of your committee.** The respected and non-partisan American Academy of Arts and Sciences recommended RCV in its report, Reinventing Democracy for the 21st Century. Leading conservative voices like Norm Ornstein and the late Senator John McCain endorse Ranked Choice Voting.

Thank you for considering these important voting and election reforms.

Sincerely,

Claire Matthews

Essex, CT